

REPORT TO NSC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MARITIME POLICY PILOT PROJECT

Introduction

Following the adoption of the Maritime Policy Blue Book by the European Union, the NSC Executive Committee agreed to develop a pilot project for the implementation of the Policy in the North Sea. At the 46th meeting in Cambridge, it was agreed that this would be taken forward by the Marine Resources group with the support of Anders Karlberg and Martin Brebner.

Purpose of Report

To update and consult the Executive Committee on progress towards developing the Maritime Policy pilot project.

Progress to date

A report identifying potential actions from the Maritime Policy Blue Book which complement the objectives of the NSC was discussed by the Marine Resources Group at their meeting on 21 January 2008. The report prioritised the following eight actions for a pilot project:

- 1) Collective Learning – Exchange of Best Practice
- 2) Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management
- 3) European Marine Observation and Data Network
- 4) Action on Marine-Based Energy Infrastructures and Resources
- 5) Action on Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change
- 6) Sustainable Maritime Tourism
- 7) Improving Socio-Economic Data for Maritime Sectors and Regions
- 8) European Maritime Day, Annual Report, Awards & Awareness Campaigns

Following discussions with the CPMR at the following Marine Resources meeting, held in Brussels on 19 May 2008, the idea of developing a North Sea Maritime Strategy based on the 'regional sea' concept was mooted. While perhaps more ambitious than previous ideas discussed, there is potential for a single Maritime Policy Strategy project to be developed with smaller work-packages directed at implementing specific actions from the Blue Book.

This idea was further supported by John Richardson's speech at the NSC General Assembly in Herring. Mr. Richardson, representing the European Commission's DG MARE, called on the regions in the North and Baltic Sea areas to take up the challenge of making their regional seas exemplar areas. While work is already underway to develop a strategy for the Baltic Sea, similar action in the North Sea Region is lacking. The notion of developing a more ambitious pilot project was discussed by the Advisors of the NSC Thematic Groups in Herring and was received positively.

Project Outline

The strategic aim of the North Sea Commission (NSC) is to promote the North Sea Basin as a major economic entity within Europe. It aims to achieve this through action-orientated joint development activities, supported through co-operation activities with a strong political dimension. The European Maritime Policy has great potential to support the strategic aim of the NSC and vice versa. A clear message from the 2008 European Maritime Day Stakeholder Event was the need for local and regional actors like the NSC members, to lead the implementation of the Maritime Policy.

This enables the needs of distinct coastal communities and stakeholders to be taken into account through a bottom-up approach to implementation. However, joint action around distinct ecosystems and maritime basins is required to ensure that implementation actions are well co-ordinated. The NSC thus becomes significant as an established and respected organisation whose work addresses a wide range of sectoral challenges.

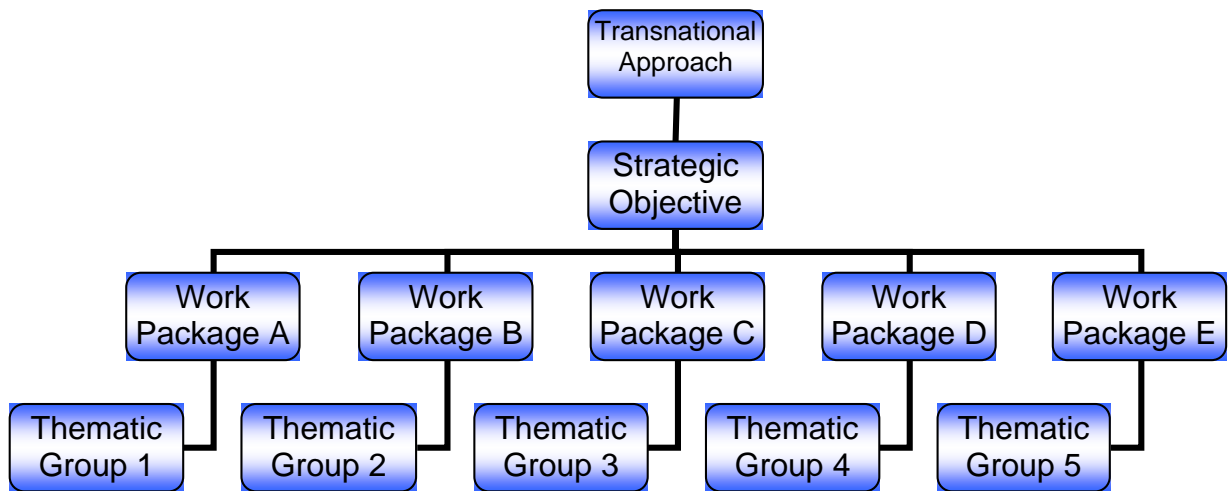
In order to advance the objectives of the NSC and the European Maritime Policy, it is proposed to develop a **North Sea Maritime Policy Project**. The overall aim of the project would be to **develop and implement a North Sea Maritime Strategy**, based on the EU's Maritime Policy Blue Book. This would be achieved through a cross-sectoral approach to the project, with different thematic work packages co-ordinated through the project structure. In this way, **the project would mirror the system of holistic governance** aspired to in the Maritime Policy. In order for the project to be truly holistic, organisations from outside the NSC, including the private sector, further and higher education, national governments and international organisation would be invited to participate in the project.

Project Structure

The project would use the traditional INTERREG structure of developing work packages within a common theme. Each work package would be focused on a limited number of the actions set out in the Commission's Maritime Policy Action Plan. The overall project would tie these work packages together to support the key aim of the Maritime Policy - **cross-sectoral and holistic maritime governance**. In this way, sectoral actors could pursue the aspirations of their thematic areas, but work in a cross-sectoral and holistic way through a **co-ordinated project on maritime governance**.

Achieving a balance between the cross-sectoral and sectoral aspects of the proposal will be key to the success of the project. The actions in the Maritime Policy Blue Book are quite rightly grouped in a cross-sectoral manner. However, for practical implementation of the project, some recognition of the expertise and priorities of key sectors must be given. This section sets out three options for the project structure:

OPTION 1 – The NSC MODEL



Under Option 1, the structure of the project would mirror that of the NSC, with the strategic objective – developing and implementing the North Sea Maritime Strategy – co-ordinated by the Executive Committee. Each Thematic Group would select one or more Maritime Policy actions which complement their workplans and implement these in the North Sea Region. The co-ordination of these work packages would be key to the success of the project, given the cross-sectoral aspirations of the Maritime Policy.

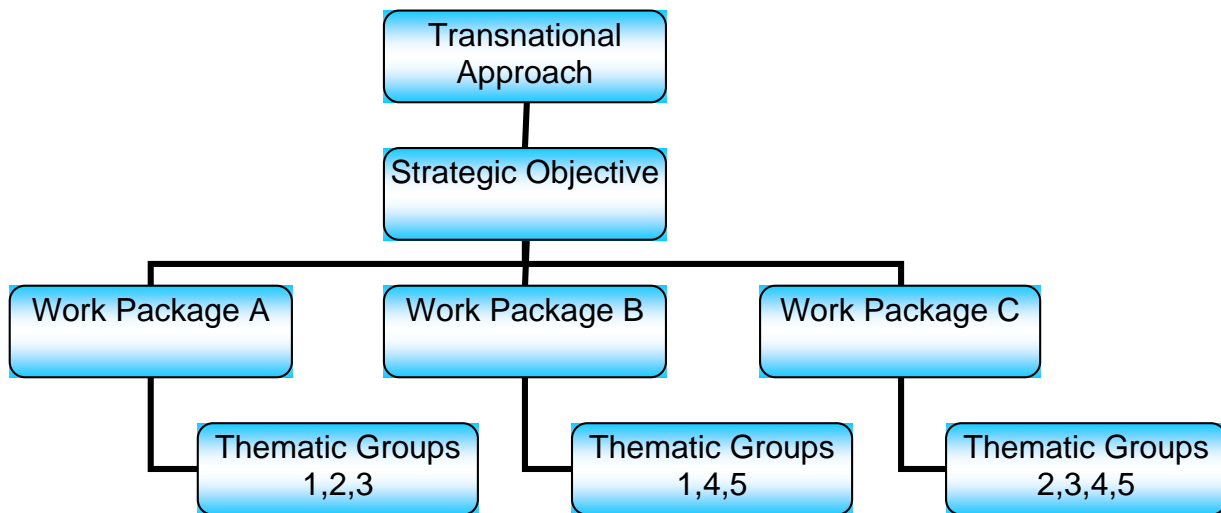
Advantages

- Relatively simple to administer
- Clear lines of responsibility
- Can be linked closely to Thematic Group workplans

Disadvantages

- Does not fully encourage cross-Thematic Group working
- Risk of five separate projects under one heading
- May discourage non-NSC participants
- May be difficult to demonstrate additionality over core NSC work
- Not the most innovative approach

OPTION 2 – CROSS-SECTORAL MODEL



Option 2 would see a lower number of work packages targeted at implementing Maritime Policy actions. Rather than being developed and implemented by individual thematic groups, cross-group working would be required. This would require the more cross-sectoral Maritime Policy actions to be chosen (e.g. marine energy) which cover the interests of more than one group. Responsibility for the co-ordination of these work packages would rest with the Executive Committee, who would be tasked with tying their work together and ensuring that focus on the strategic aim of the project was maintained.

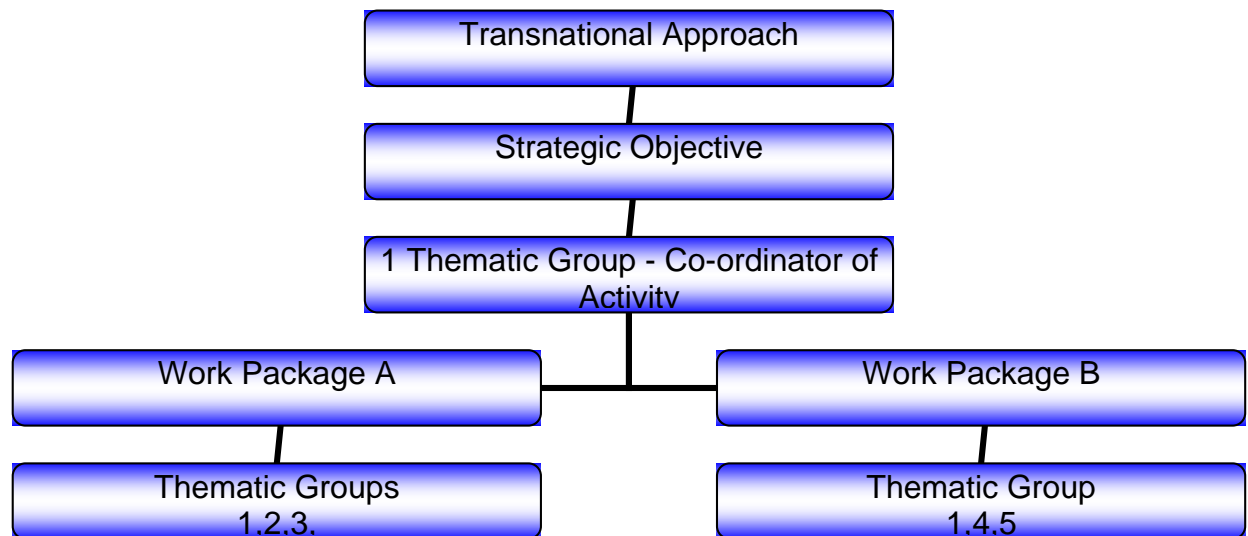
Advantages

- Encourages joint working by the Thematic Groups.
- Clear additionality (i.e. not seeking funding for core NSC activities)
- Scope for synergies between thematic areas to be explored
- Clear link between work packages and strategic objective (i.e. cross-sectoral work packages demonstrating cross-sectoral governance)
- Accessible to other participants (private sector, national governments, international organisations such as OSPAR etc.)

Disadvantages

- Would require new administrative structures
- May be difficult to identify work packages which are of interest to multiple groups
- Lines of responsibility would need clarified
- Co-ordination could be complex (several Thematic Groups need to meet at the same time)

OPTION 3 – LEAD GROUP MODEL



Option 3 would encourage the Thematic Groups to work together on a cross-sectoral basis to implement selected Maritime Policy actions. A lead Thematic Group would be tasked by the Executive Committee with co-ordinating the project and would be involved in all the work packages. The other Thematic Groups would participate in the work packages of interest to themselves. All the Thematic Groups would be involved in developing the work packages and the overall project.

Advantages

- Encourages joint working by the Thematic Groups.
- Clear additionality (i.e. not seeking funding for core NSC activities)
- Scope for synergies between thematic areas to be explored
- Clear link between work packages and strategic objective (i.e. cross-sectoral work packages demonstrating cross-sectoral governance)
- Accessible to other participants (private sector, national governments, international organisations such as OSPAR etc.)
- Clear lines of responsibility (Lead group drives project forward)
- Balance between strategic objective and thematic work packages

Disadvantages

- May be difficult to identify work packages which are of interest to multiple groups
- Would the Thematic Groups be happy for one group to lead?
- Co-ordination could be complex (several Thematic Groups need to meet at the same time)

Funding

A number of sources of funding could be explored to finance the project. However, given the geographical scope and strategic objective of the project (to develop and implement a Maritime Strategy for the North Sea Region), the INTERREG North Sea Programme would appear to be a logical first point of call. The challenge would be to fit a cross-sectoral project into an INTERREG programme which has four thematic objectives, as the project may fit into more than one area. Discussions with the INTERREG Secretariat at an early opportunity would be desirable to maximise the chance of a successful application. This project could also help build links between the NSC and the INTERREG North Sea Region Programme, as set out in the consultancy report presented to the Herring General Assembly.

Next Steps

With the Executive Committee's approval, the Marine Resources group would continue to develop this project idea in conjunction with the other Thematic Groups. The results of this work would be concluded with the production of an outline **North Sea Maritime Strategy** at the Maritime Stakeholder Event to be held in Aberdeenshire during Maritime Week 2009. Partners would then be identified (including a Lead Partner) and the project would be worked up in close collaboration with the INTERREG North Sea Region Secretariat, with the view to submitting a bid for funding in 2009.

Recommendations;

- 1) The Executive Committee notes the progress made in developing the Maritime Policy Pilot Project and endorses the continuation of this work.**
- 2) The Executive Committee debates the three options for the project structure and selects its preferred option.**

Report by Martin Brebner and Stuart Bews,

25 July 2008